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Haftara Tazria and Metzora
by Julie Zhuk on 2023-04-29

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Haftara Tazria

This week's parsha was read together, it was a long one. It was Tazria and Metzora. The name of the parsha is Tazria, it is linked to tza'arat. It was a form of leprosy that the haftara later will go in depth about. The first part of the parsha was Tazria and the second part was Metzora. The same was done in the haftara. The first part is covering the story that took place in Tazria. The haftara is found in the book of Kings. There was a string of miracles that happened thanks to the prophet Elisha. The setting of the story is around a king named Ben Haddad. He was in charge of Aram. The king gathered his whole army and siege around Samaria, that was the capital of the northern tribes of Israel. They were primarily targeting the city of Shomron in Samaria and they didn't allow food into the city. Many people were starving and King Achav of Israel wanted to kill Elisha.

King Achav's reasoning behind this was that Elisha could have figured out how to fix the situation. The situation of not having any food for people to eat. King Achav thought for sure all Elisha had to do was pray to G-d and food would be brought where everyone was starving. This was not the case. He came to Elisha, who told him one day a se'ah of barley would be a shekel. The king's officer's made fun of the words Elisha said. They questioned, "Even if G-d was to make windows in the sky, could such a thing happen?" In response the prophet, Elisha told them they would see with their own eyes what he said would come true. The only thing is, they wouldn't eat the barley that would one day cost a single shekel. Another part of the story of Tazria is that Elisha was able to cure Na'aman. Elisha did this through a miracle, Na'aman had tzara'at. Na'aman was the commander of Aram's army.

Haftara Metzora

This haftara is a continuation of Tzara'at. The haftara is long and is meant to be read together, because the term tzaraat translates to leprosy. The name Metzora was speaking about anyone that was once afflicted with tzaraat. There were four people in this week's haftara who got sick with tzaraat. These were Gachazi, and his three sons. We are reminded that Gachazi acted as Elisha's assistant. There were several reasons why Gachazi himself got tzaraat. One of these reasons go back to the story of Elisha promising a woman who was struggling with a sick child. Elisha promised the woman to help bring the child back. Elisha sent Gachazi to check on the child. He specifically told Gachazi to not mention a word about the situation to anyone. Gachazi did just the opposite, he shared with those who asked.

Gachazi showed his lack of faith in Elisha that this child could be brought back from the dead. In this particular haftara the mistake that Gachazi made to begin with had to do with Na'aman. Na'aman wanted to give a present to Elisha for curing him. Elisha put his foot down and said he wouldn't accept anything. Finally Na'aman stopped trying and Elisha walked away. Gachazi

went back to Na'aman on his own and said that Elisha did in fact make an oath that he wanted something from Na'aman. Na'aman was willing to give some of his money as a gift through Gachazi. This was Na'aman's way of saying thanks for Elisha curing him. This was a huge mistake that Gachazi made and as we read the haftara, we must remember that G-d was watching. Since Gachazi and his three sons were metzora (afflicted with leprosy) they were isolated from everyone around them.

This was because they were not allowed to be around others, they were considered impure. They didn't just go outside of the city, but they went to the area where the Aram army was located. They felt that staying right outside of the city where the other Jews were living was futile and that they would starve to death. Luckily for them, when they went to the camp of Aram, it had been deserted. This was all due to G-d, He had made a miracle. The miracle was that He convinced the soldiers of Aram that they heard the sounds of a great army coming towards them. Quickly the soldiers of Aram panicked and ran away as fast as they could without anyone looking. G-d had another reason for setting things up this way, He wanted Gachazi to do teshuva. Instead Gachazi looted from Aram for himself.

At first it was about the money he wanted, but eventually he came to his senses. Those who were afflicted with tzaraat went and notified the guards at the city gate. Then they notified the king who had some guards go check this situation out. When they confirmed it was true, the people went over there. They found so much food in the camp. In the end of this haftara, what Elisha said in the beginning of the haftara The flour was sold for a se'ah and the barley was sold for a shekel. The king officer who had earlier made fun of Elisha, was appointed to stand guard at the city's gate. There were so many people, they were all running to get food. They ended up trampling the officer and he died just like Elisha had predicted. Elisha's prediction came true, he saw the food, but he couldn't eat it. The last part of the haftara is Jews believe the mashiach will come suddenly and it will be a miracle.